

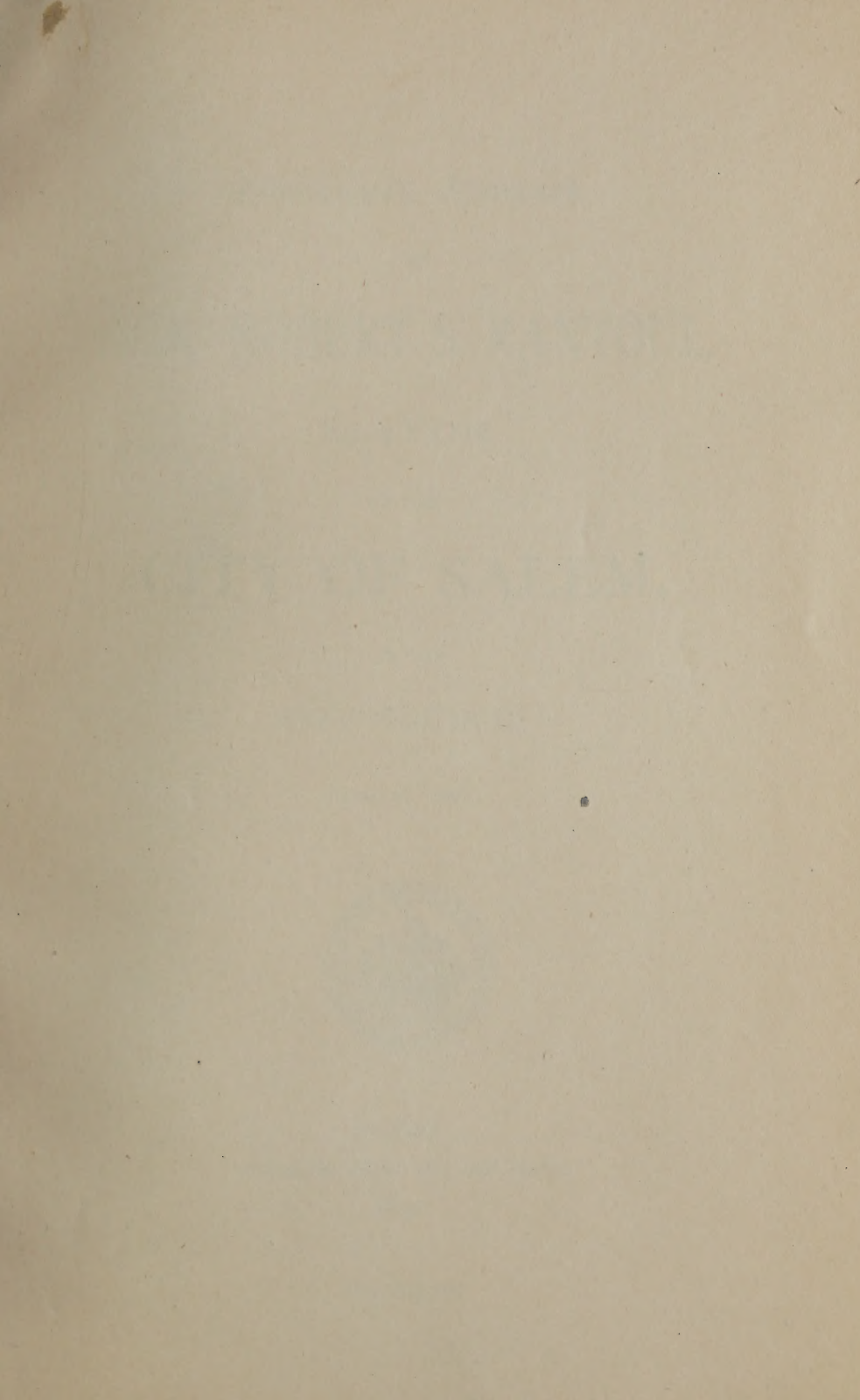
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SALEM, MASS.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
OF
HON. ROBERT S. RANTOUL,
MAYOR
OF THE
CITY OF SALEM,
TO THE
CITY COUNCIL,
JANUARY, 1891.



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R213
1891

SALEM:
OBSERVER BOOK AND JOB PRINT,
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CARD
CATALOGUED

MAYOR'S ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the City Council:

Thirty thousand people, whose interests are as dear to them as are those of any equal number of people in the world, have called upon us, through legal process sanctioned by tradition and the wisdom of the past, to conduct their municipal affairs for the coming year.

This is no empty honor. It means, to the apprehension of right-minded men, that we are to treat the questions of the hour, as they pass before us in our official sphere, in the light of our best judgment and our honest understanding at the time each question comes up, and that we are to enjoy that immunity from suspicion and that presumption of good faith which fair-minded people extend to their chosen agents in other departments of affairs.

With the oath we have taken, we severally, each for himself, record our purpose to use the powers thus placed in our hands with a single view to the welfare of the whole,—to forego, for the time being, any interest of our own, however legitimate, which might antagonize the common interests of the city, and to dedicate such portion of our time and ener-

gies, irksome though the duty may sometimes prove to be, to the general good.

The political policies of state and nation have no natural connection with municipal affairs. Not only is it well that city governments be wholly divorced from political control, but it is even true that the extent to which they are so divorced proves to be a very fair measure of their efficiency and success. Accordingly we approach the problems which lie before us in a purely non-partisan and independent spirit, and examine, first of all, our financial standing in the light thrown by the able reports of the city treasurer and of the various departments, upon the matter of our taxation, our debt and our immediate monetary needs.

FINANCES.

The tax rate has been reduced, in the year just closed, a half dollar on every thousand. It should be our endeavor to reduce it still further, and I am not without hopes of success. Spasmodic retrenchments, now and then, effect little. The better mark to aim at seems to be a steady, reliable, moderate rule of taxation, which shall encourage residents who are here to remain with us, and others seeking a domicile to find it amongst us.

The average tax rate for the last ten years has been \$16.05 per thousand dollars. That for the

thirty years since the war was \$14.63. Probably the rate, under existing conditions, could not be reduced below \$16, but it ought not to vary capriciously from year to year.*

State law fixes a limit beyond which taxation cannot be imposed. It is, in my judgment, desirable for several reasons not to approximate very closely to this limit. For the year 1890 the rate of taxation, which might have risen, under the law, as high as \$18.90 on a thousand, has been kept at \$17. This has not been accomplished without effort. If it be difficult to reduce personal expenses when they have grown to be extravagant, the same course is doubly difficult when dealing with public funds. It was the misfortune of the government of 1890 to take office at a time when the city expenditures were gauged on an exceptionally generous scale.

The administration of 1889, when it assumed office, found in the city treasury a cash balance of

*THE YEARLY TAX RATE FOR THIRTY YEARS PAST.

1861, . \$8.00	1871, . \$17.00	1881, . \$13.00
1862, . 10.00	1872, . 17 00	1882, . 15 50
1863, . 10.40	1873, . 18.00	1883, . 16.00
1864, . 11.50	1874, . 16.50	1884, . 17.50
1865, . 15 00	1875, . 16 00	1885, . 16.50
1866, . 10.00	1876, . 15 00	1886, . 15 50
1867, . 12 50	1877, . 16.00	1887, . 16.00
1868, . 13 50	1878, . 15.00	1888, . 16.00
1869, . 14 50	1879, . 13.50	1889, . 17.50
1870, . 14 50	1880, . 14.50	1890, . 17 00

\$20,765, out of which sum were due and payable deferred claims amounting to \$6,115, leaving a contribution to the assets of the year 1889 from the net cash of the year preceding, of \$14,650. In addition to this sum, the expenditures of the year 1889 absorbed the product of a rate of taxation only once exceeded and once equalled since 1856, and which yielded a gross total of tax receipts, the most burthensome of any year with the possible exception of 1873, since Salem became a city.*

In addition to these sums, and in addition to all payments, there were contracted during the year 1889, in excess of the cash balance left in the treasury at the end of that year, and paid during the year 1890 on account of the year 1889, deferred claims to the amount of \$16,458.56, so that the total liability, paid and unpaid, incurred in 1889, aggregated a sum quite as large as could have been raised by taxation during that year without over-running the tax limit of the year.

*Comparative statement of annual expenditures, after deducting payments for debt, interest and special expenditures, from 1871 to 1890 inclusive.

1871,	.	\$293,326.85	1881,	.	\$328,871.92
'72,	.	338,031.10	'82,	.	342,453.30
'73,	.	439,326.00	'83,	.	348,602.04
'74,	.	300,027.81	'84,	.	362,983.72
'75,	.	328,455.18	'85,	.	341,847.15
'76,	.	346,285.66	'86,	.	351,917.13
'77,	.	302,705.56	'87,	.	390,253.25
'78,	.	287,500.92	'88,	.	406,665.04
'79,	.	280,810.95	'89,	.	452,857.49
'80,	.	327,102.91	'90,	.	416,986.61

The growth of city expenditures can be checked in some, but not in all of its items. Electric lighting, a costly luxury, but one which few citizens are prepared to do without,—a most valuable adjunct in police administration,—is subject to the terms of a contract entered into November, 1888, to run for three years thereafter.

The extensive operations of the board of health, made exceptionally so in 1890 by the terrible recollections of the year before, of course involve large cost, and their value is without price.

The matter of military aid, increased yearly by the growing disabilities of veteran soldiers, as well as by the ill-judged legislation which tempts so many of their kindred to become recipients of public bounty,—the recent statutory provision for persons “given to or subject to dipsomania, or habitual drunkenness,” placing them, in large numbers, in state asylums already crowded with the worthy insane, where they are supported in idleness and ease by the industry of the classes fortunately exempt from this statutory disease,—these are among the causes of outlay where the best efforts of the constituted agents of the city are powerless to protect tax-payers from their growing burdens.

On the other hand it is proper to add that what

could be done has been done to guard against extravagance and waste. The alms-house farm and the poor department at large show satisfactory returns.

The public library, which has reached a point in its career where free expenditure would be both easy and advantageous, has curtailed its rate of outlay to one-half the former amount, and returns an unexpended balance of \$1334.53 to the city treasury at the end of its second year.

Other departments, I need not enumerate them, have done what they could to keep within the moderate appropriations asked for at the beginning of the year, and the citizen who examines the reports with the scrutiny they deserve, will find no exception to the watchfulness and diligence which have been exercised in his behalf.

The condition of the bonded debt calls for no remark. That it is in every way satisfactory appears from the lucid and intelligible statements of the city treasurer and of the custodians of the sinking funds, now before you. I have recently announced my views on this subject at some length, in two messages which have been in print, and I can add nothing to those expressions better calculated to disclose the financial principles by which I shall be guided.

CITY AUDITOR.

The auditing of city accounts is a topic much debated by the public and much considered by officials. The present system is certainly primitive, cumbersome and laborious, but there is no lack of public-spirited citizens ready to do the work it entails. I do not regard the system as inadequate. The chance of a fraudulent or a duplicated bill successfully running the gauntlet of so many inspections is infinitesimal, and the history of the city shows that this happens as rarely as any known system can ensure.

A requirement embodied in Section 3 of the finance ordinance, providing that bills offered for approval shall bear the certificate and signature of the person authorizing the expenditure,—not the authentication of the head of a department merely, whose knowledge must be derived at second-hand, but that of the very person who made the contract,—this wholesome provision, rigidly observed in most of the departments and of essential value, should be enforced in all without exception. And some means should be devised for auditing effectively the receipts of departments like the almshouse and the water works, where the receipts form no inconsiderable fraction of the gross transactions.

The suggestion that the salary of a competent auditor would be saved from losses now occurring in consequence of loose methods of accounting is, I think, fallacious, and the suggestion for creating a common clerk of committees, who shall absorb the salaries of the various clerks now employed, seems to me to be equally so, from the fact that the several committees, each of which has its own plans and purposes to develop, will find it neither advantageous nor pleasant to have their inchoate designs communicated from one to another by a common subordinate. I am confident that, whatever ridicule may be cast upon the antiquated methods by which we audit accounts, the result will be found as satisfactory, economical and thorough as any system of inspection, be it old or modern, can insure.

CANAL STREET.

Canal street is well advanced and the opening spring will demonstrate its value. It has been built in an exceptionally substantial and thorough manner, and, when provided with trees on its eastern side, will afford the stranger entering town from Boston a first view of Salem much more inviting than the disorder it has supplanted.

The distance from the stone station on Washington street by Canal street and Broadway to the

Marblehead railroad crossing on Loring avenue is the same, within a few rods, as by Washington and Lafayette streets. But the grade is vastly easier and more even. Starting from an elevation of 6 feet above mean high tide, Washington street attains a grade of 27 feet at the head of Ropes street, which falls away, after entering Lafayette street, to 19 feet at Gardner street and rises to 31 feet again at the crossing of Holly and Leach streets. At Clifton avenue the road sinks to 19 feet and reaches 28 feet again at its junction with Loring avenue, beyond which, within a few rods, it attains its highest grade of 38 feet, and then descends abruptly to the original grade.

Nowhere on the Canal street line is there a grade higher than 21 feet and that is at a single point in Broadway, which, if reduced in the spring by 10 feet, will leave the whole route a dead level throughout from five to eleven feet above mean high tide.

Into this thoroughfare enter at easy grade no less than seven populous streets, which have been heretofore nothing but lanes without an outlet. Ultimately Canal street will provide an outlet for four others. It provides a bed for a new water main which will connect a number of dead ends and quicken the circulation and reduce the fire risk of a

large area. It provides also for a much-needed sewer, which would have cost about one-third of the amount involved in building the street.

It is expected that it will withdraw from Lafayette street the heavy transportation of hides and bark, hay and market gardening, night offal and express wagons, which now incommode that splendid avenue and make it burthensome to the city to keep in repair. The large area of unimproved lands, brought by the new street within easy reach of our central facilities, is expected in a short time to be covered with taxable estates and populated with thrifty, tax-paying families enough to make the outlay a remunerative one to the city.

WATER WORKS.

The matter of making our water works more nearly, if not quite, self-supporting, acquires a new interest this year from the large addition to the construction account resulting from the laying of a new water main. There is no reason in the nature of things why water, any more than other necessities of living, should be paid for by taxation. Self-respecting persons desire to earn their bread, and would resent as an indignity the offer to furnish out of the tax rates any portion of their supply of clothing or of food. The same view will ultimately assert itself in the matter of water rates.

The present difficulty is one of adjustment. The object should be to so adjust the burthen as not to oppress the poor, nor to check industrial progress. The ten per cent. discount, having been found to inure to the benefit of persons of easy means who could well pay their water bills promptly and thus save it, but not at all to the advantage of those of limited means, who as a rule could not avail of it, should be abolished, and a system substituted like that long approved in the collection of taxes. For a reasonable time the bill of the delinquent water taker would stand at interest—at the expiration of that time his supply would be cut off. The matter of hand hose can now be treated in the same spirit. Hand hose are not used by impecunious persons but by citizens who are householders and able to pay, at some rate, for the very large drain they make on the head of water. The reason for allowing the free use of hand hose was, that in our central streets the water used in street sprinkling was given freely by the city. Last year, through an unfortunate difference of judgment as to which streets should and which should not be sprinkled, the dust went unchecked and the streets unwatered. The argument was that taxpayers living in streets which were not watered had no such interest in paying for sprinkling the favored streets as would jus-

tify taxing them to pay for it. Fortunately the legislation of the last year removes the difficulty. By Chapter 365 of the Acts of 1890 it is provided that cities may water the streets and assess the cost upon abutters on the streets so watered.

Whenever abutters on the the leading streets pay to the city for a system of street watering the sums they now pay for water carts, employed by contract, there will be little trouble in enforcing moderate assessments on hand hose used for street sprinkling. I shall hardly be pardoned for omitting to say that evidence reaches me from a variety of sources that the laying of the new main has been accomplished in a most creditable and satisfactory manner. It meets all expectations.

THE QUESTION OF SEWERAGE.

Large expenditures upon a comprehensive system of sewerage cannot be long postponed. The more ample and convenient the water supply becomes, year by year, the more indispensable is an effective method of getting rid of its plethoric abundance. It has been the study of the street department of late to put down only such drains and sewers as a present necessity demanded, and to put them down in such a way that they may readily become parts of a comprehensive whole, so far as it is possible to anticipate that pressing want. This policy should be maintained.

The movement for a general scheme of drainage is not yet ripe, nor should it be undertaken by Salem until our neighbors of Peabody, Beverly, and possibly Marblehead are prepared to unite in a common enterprise, or at least agreed not to antagonize each other. I have no doubt that when that time is reached, a special act of legislation would be expedient defining the rights, obligations and limitations of each municipality, and moreover authorizing the payment of the large cost involved, by a loan extending for 30 or 40 years, in place of the 20 years to which the ordinary sewerage bonds are limited by statute.

I take the liberty in this connection to call attention to the immediate need of a sewer throughout the length of Webb street, which shall at once check the further pollution of Collins cove, and to the obvious call for further attention to the drainage of South Salem. Other cases of immediate necessity, quite as important to the communities affected by them, but by no means so extensive, will at once challenge your attention. The basin enclosed between Canal street and the higher ground on the east, now forming a receptacle for dangerous refuse from Pond, Ropes, Cedar and Porter streets, should be at once filled up, under authority of chapter 441 of the acts of 1889.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

The diminished cost of the public library, coupled with its pronounced success, will be found to be a matter of genuine satisfaction. The extent to which the collections are used, and the manner in which they are used, together with their rapid growth both through purchase and through donation, in the best elements of a great intellectual store-house, have quite outstripped the most sanguine expectations of its promoters, and if all this can be accomplished and sustained without burthensome taxation, at the moderate yearly stipend of twelve thousand dollars, the general public will be agreeably disappointed.

MILITARY AID.

The item of military aid is increased this year some three thousand dollars by causes quite beyond our control. Not only do the persons fairly chargeable grow more helpless and more numerous, but new classes of beneficiaries have been added and the community, if it were willing, would be unable to avoid the charge.

STREET DEPARTMENT.

The street department shows an encouraging reduction in its total, and how far this change is due, beyond the vigilance and activity of the superintendent and of the committee, to the efficient opera-

tions of the steam road roller, is a question well worthy of examination. The department has been actively and incessantly employed with the best results throughout the year, and the curtailing of its means does not seem to have impaired the value of its service.

The horses of the fire department, formerly in charge of the street department when not on duty at a fire, have been transferred to the department to which they naturally belong.

Overlooking the slight disturbance of balances which will soon re-adjust themselves, the change may be said to give entire satisfaction to both the departments interested. To this change is due a very considerable reduction in the gross expenses of the street department, with a corresponding advance in the totals of the fire department. Taken together, the aggregate expense of the fire and street departments have been less in 1890 than they were in 1889.

BRIDGE STREET WIDENING.

I respectfully invite your attention to the facts that Bridge street, at its approach to the Essex bridge, is in the main about fifty feet wide, is much in need of immediate repairs, is much encumbered with street railway tracks, and is bordered on either

side below March and Planters streets by land of moderate value, almost wholly unencumbered with buildings of any kind. A plan made by Charles A. Putnam, C. E., January, 1887, shows a possible widening by which, for less than a thousand dollars, a strip from ten to twelve feet wide on the southern side of Bridge street can be secured with little or no disturbance of private rights.

This strip is liable at any time to be built upon and become much more costly to the city, should it then be desired. By Act of 1872, Chap. 220, the city has the power, which has been often and wisely used, of laying out a needed public way in anticipation of an advance in values, but only finishing the way for travel when a public exigency may require.

The rapid growth of the town of Beverly and the large amount of summer travel from the beaches to Salem, and of night transportation from the towns as far north as Rowley passing over this thoroughfare to the Boston hay and produce markets, seem to make this a proper case for the application of the law just cited.

The travel over this thoroughfare is heavy now and will never be lighter. The necessity for enlarged facilities is surely coming, and procrastination will result in a loss in money as well as inconvenience.

The extremely moderate sum of \$1000 or \$1500 will put this part of the southern side of the road into a permanently satisfactory condition, leaving the question of extending the widening towards the west as far as Webb street or of treating the northerly side, in the whole or a part of its length, in the same way, to the determination of the future.

GRAVEL BY STREET CARS.

The time can not be far off when it will be possible, either by purchasing gravel pits near street railway tracks now in existence, or through the laying of new tracks near some of our present sources of supply, to deliver cheap gravel, by a night transportation service, at many of the principal points where gravel can be advantageously used.

The cost of carting this bulky article by horse power for any considerable distance is so great as to be prohibitory. Whenever gravel can be placed cheaply in large masses upon our leading highways, some improvements will at once be possible which can now only be postponed. The solid filling of our end of Essex bridge as far as low water mark, a portion measuring one third of the Salem side of the structure, will then become expedient and will result in a large saving in annual repairs. The renewal of the draw, an item of some magnitude, cannot long be delayed.

SOUTH BRIDGE.

Convenient access to the city proper from South Salem has been a matter of earnest discussion for many years. Public opinion has at last focused on several points, and the matter is ripe for action. The South bridge should disappear. It is an obvious injury to the value of property in that delightful section, and has no longer any reason for being. It is rotten, unserviceable and dangerous. It should give way for a stone structure, which will provide for grading the great avenue continuously across the river, of a commodious width in keeping with its general dimensions.

After this shall have been done the cost of building a street over the river between Washington and Lafayette streets will be considerably greater than it would be now. The demand for such a street has been so generally recognized that I do not feel at liberty to ignore it. It has been forcibly urged in annual messages and favorably considered by the city council. I have the honor to invite your early consideration of both these projects, which should be entered upon promptly, if at all, and in conjunction with each other.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

The fire department I believe to be in excellent condition. Its too frequent calls to duty procure

for it the well-earned commendations of the public. It needs a new steamer and engine house in the upper section of the town and a second hook and ladder equipment.

The change of tenure of office of the engineers from one year to two and three years, made in 1888, has produced good results. It gives the officers a stronger hold on the men, leads to more care in selection, and secures to the department a more stable and continuous policy.

You will be called upon in a few weeks to elect an engineer and two assistants. The canvas will be spirited, and gentlemen of the council will do well to inform themselves in advance of the merits of candidates.

I respectfully suggest that the display of a headquarters flag at some point near every fire where the chief engineer or some officer representing him could be found at all times, ready to hear reports and issue orders, would prove to be a valuable adjunct to the general efficiency of the department.

THE FIRE LIMITS.

I respectfully suggest that it is a proper object of inquiry in this compactly built wooden city, whether the area, within which roofing of non-combustible material should be required, may not be extended with advantage considerably beyond the present

fire limits, so that within such enlarged area no new structure shall be erected, and no old structure shall be repaired to an extent equal to fifty per cent. or more of its value, except the roof of such building be made of the approved materials now required, by Chapter XXII of the city ordinances, to be employed within the present fire limits, and I would further recommend an early examination of this question, so that, should the proposition commend itself and be found to require legislation in carrying it out, a petition to the general court for such enactment may be seasonably presented.

THE COMMON FENCE.

The condition of the Common fence is a matter of immediate concern. It is a heavy iron fence, and there are several sections of it measuring nine feet long or more, each of which can be put in motion by the hand of a child.

No department of the city government ought longer to be made responsible for continuing this condition of things beyond the opening of another season, when the crowds gathered on some great holiday like the Fourth of July may, by pressing against a defective section of the fence, throw it over with disastrous results.

Under these circumstances you will find it incumbent on you to take prompt and efficient action.

Several courses are open to you. The first suggestion to be considered is this: Can the present fence, to which nobody, so far as I know, has made any objection on the score of taste, be put in such substantially good order as to be worth painting, and likely to last for some years longer, at a cost not wholly out of proportion to the actual value of the structure or the price of a new one?

The present fence was completed December 2d, 1850, at a cost of \$7044.31.

Of the 248 posts in the fence, 118 require repairs or renewal. Of the 239 sections, 57 are defective.

If, upon investigation, you are able to answer this preliminary question in the affirmative, you will probably have little hesitation in deciding that it is your duty to repair the fence. If not, then a choice between other courses presents itself. We may either remove the fence and substitute a granite curb,—the system very generally in vogue outside of New England, and undoubtedly the cheapest, since, if properly laid down, the curb would last for an indefinite period without repairs or expense. Or if the exposure to runaway accidents resulting from this course prove a serious objection, then a low wrought-iron fence, or a low evergreen hedge with or without a fence might be considered.

Probably any structure which will be effectual to keep out runaway horses, will also obstruct the suc-

cessful pursuit of the disturbers of the peace, who now invade the Common on summer evenings to an annoying extent, and enjoy a large immunity from arrest by reason of the height of the present fence.

I make no recommendation beyond this, that the proper committee should treat this matter with promptness and decision.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

The police force is a most important adjunct of municipal administration. It is not only the right arm, but serves also as the eyes and ears of the executive. The people of Salem cheerfully pay enough to maintain an efficient police force. This they are entitled to have.

They are fortunate in having at the head of it an officer of large and varied experience who enjoys, as he deserves to enjoy, the confidence of the public. But I found the force in some respects in an unsatisfactory condition. I know of no reason why the same *esprit de corps* which is a characteristic of successful mercantile, charitable and social organizations, and is so marked a factor in the efficiency of every military corps and fire company, should not pervade a police organization, and gradually supplant personal antagonisms and jealousy with harmonious co-operation in a common work.

The appointing power is hampered, in police selections, in several ways. Many of the most desirable men are either unwilling to accept service on the force, or if willing to accept service, are unwilling to subject themselves to the civil service examinations, without which they cannot be appointed.

Veterans, as a class, are no longer young enough for new appointments. Their habits of discipline and drill, their experience of authority both in exercising and in conforming to it, together with their approved courage, are amongst the most valuable of qualifications. But the meagre list of unexamined veterans certified by the commissioners show how surely the time is going by when the appointing power can look for much material from that heroic class.

Of the civilians passed and certified by the civil service examiners, not a very large percentage possess the highest requirements for the place. The examiners have no means of testing applicants on many of the points essential to success, such as courage, energy, promptness, good sense, sound judgment of men and things, and capacity for command. No form of examination which is within the purview of the present law will go far to weigh these qualities, and even in the more obvious matters of sobriety, integrity, fair standing in the com-

munity and the like, the examiners are powerless to certify candidates with assurance, because citizens who sign papers recommending them for examination sign them largely out of a weak good nature merely.

So long as the law stands as it does, it prevents the mayor from nominating any persons not approved by the examiners. So long as public opinion is indifferent as it is in the matter of recommending, the examiners will continue to approve unworthy persons who cannot without scandal be appointed, or if appointed cannot perform acceptably the duties of the service.

I have done what I could, with the able and hearty co-operation of the city marshal, and shall continue to do what I can to keep the force up to the high standard the people of Salem have a right to demand of it. When I first examined the roster of the force the average age of officers, most of whom I was expected to re-appoint, was forty-five years and ten months. No man can apply for appointment on the police force of Boston who is older than thirty. In other cities than Boston no man over forty can make application for police duty. The limit of age in the army of the United States is thirty-five years. The oldest patrolman on our force was sixty-six. The senior in continuous ser-

vice had served thirty-two years. I need not say that age is not necessarily a disqualification. Experience and discretion are most valuable qualities in themselves, and some of our ablest officers will be found amongst the oldest.

But other qualities are equally indispensable, such as activity, strength, mental and physical vigor. The average weight of the force was good. The minimum limit fixed by law is 140 pounds. Our force averaged 177 pounds. The minimum height of applicants allowed by law is 5 feet, 8 inches, and we have but two officers who measure less. I have taken the ground that it is due to the self respect of the force, as well as to the interests of the city, that no man shall wear our police uniform who is not free from scandals and known vices, and in this I expect that the public sentiment of Salem will sustain me. Some attention has been given during the year to a system of drill, and this will be continued. The police authorities of Cambridge assured me that the success of their force in dealing with the late riots was directly due to the systematic drill which they had practiced.

Through my action the average age of the police corps is reduced somewhat, and changes have been made which contribute to the efficiency of the force in other ways. The new adjustment of hours of duty, under order of March 24, is satisfactory.

The record of the year has been a creditable one, and it is my purpose to make a critical examination of the personnel of the force at an early day, and to renominate all such officers as seem to me to deserve well of the people of Salem.

The present edition of the police regulations is exhausted, and they should not be reprinted without thorough revision.

LIQUOR LIMITS.

The system of territorial limitation in the granting of licenses, now for several years in successful operation, gives very general satisfaction and ought to be continued. Whilst no legal enactments, whether well or ill enforced, will ever eradicate the vice of drunkenness, it is believed the present adjustment effects all that can be accomplished for good morals without largely increased appliances and a greatly changed public sentiment.

Such legal remedies as we have at our command have been vigilantly applied, in good faith, in the interests of sobriety and moderation, and it is my earnest wish that the present government may adhere to the existing plan until something so clearly wiser and better as to command general support may be substituted therefor.

THE SCHOOLS.

It has been my fixed purpose throughout the year just closed to make myself personally acquainted with the practical working of the schools. This I desired to do especially because we had no superintendent of schools, and also because I entertain some definite convictions upon the matter of public instruction.

This undertaking has proved to be utterly beyond my power. To become so far familiar with the condition of a school, employing from 8 to 14 teachers, as to form an opinion of its quality safe to act upon or worth discussing, calls for the surrender of several uninterrupted half days of time.

There are eighteen schools equally entitled to the attention of a public official, and, while I have found it practically impossible to devote a single day without interruption to this interesting work, I am safe in saying that a month would be a moderate estimate of the time it would require. I regret therefore to find myself closely restricted as to what I am able to say of the condition of the schools, and can do little more than to commend the economy, fidelity and general intelligence and high purpose which have marked their management throughout the year, and to add my endorsement of the general

verdict that a school superintendent is needed, and that, while the man equipped for the place would be cheap at any price, an unfit superintendent or even a mediocre superintendent would be worse than nobody.

You will find a slight increase in the net expenses of this department in 1890 over those of 1889, due in the main to an addition to the number of teachers employed, and in part to an advance in the salaries of janitors.

The reports of the sub-committees on the Naumkeag and evening schools, on music and on drawing will be read with interest by those who desire the unchecked success of our great educational system, and who believe with me that opportunities for gaining useful knowledge should be made as easy and engaging as are the facilities for vicious indulgence with which the young are surrounded.

PLEASURE RIDING IN CITY CARRIAGES.

Some apprehension, in which I do not share, has been lately expressed lest an alleged practice of using city vehicles for pleasure riding was growing into a serious abuse. If an investigation of the facts should demonstrate that the apprehension is, contrary to my belief, well founded, the abuse should be promptly and effectually checked. This

end may be accomplished in a number of ways, not open to the objection of needlessly calling too general attention to the delinquencies of a few officials and giving the impression that a practice which perhaps prevails to some extent in every city, is peculiarly characteristic of our own. If the practice is thought to prevail amongst the subordinates of one or more departments, and these parties for any reasons cannot be singled out to bear the blame, some provision like this might effect the object. A written order from the head of a department should alone be received as authority for the use of vehicles belonging to the city, in case of complaint. This would put the responsibility for the abuse, when charged, upon the head of the department selecting and retaining the subordinate accused, and there it ought properly to rest.

If the abuse be charged upon heads of departments themselves, and upon officials deliberately selected for grave and important trusts by yearly ballot in the city council, the remedy is in the election of persons more worthy of those trusts.

We cannot excuse ourselves, nor will our constituencies pardon us, for placing in some of the most responsible positions in our gift men whom we are unwilling to trust unchecked with the use of a horse and chaise, nor will this community, in its

sober judgment, excuse us for proclaiming to the world that Salem affords no citizens capable and willing to do her work, who are not above such trivial imputations as these.

MONUMENTS AND RECORDS.

It would be a matter of general interest and satisfaction if an annual provision of a few hundreds of dollars could be spared for the preservation of our ancient monuments and records.

Our town records are complete from 1634. Small portions of them have been rendered indestructible in print, or even copied, and moth and rust are never idle, and risk from fire never absent, as year by year makes them more and more a sacred charge.

The city of Boston has of late established a department for this work, and historic towns like Cambridge and Lexington have made their roadsides eloquent with monumental stones. The indexing of records and files now in our hands for daily use,—the copying of parish records, now inaccessible, in private hands and liable to loss—these objects alone would seem to justify a small expense, if we did nothing more.

I cannot repress the feeling that we owe it to ourselves, as well as to the illustrious dead who left

to us as an heirloom this heritage of fame, to preserve and hand down unimpaired to our successors such records as remain of their high deserving. I need not remind you that we have about us, besides the spot where British arrogance was first checked by force, another spot as yet unmarked, almost under our very eaves, whereon a Massachusetts legislature firmly closed its doors in face of the royal edict, and in defiance of an empire, went on to deliberate for the general good. We have spots famous as the residence of Roger Williams, of Hugh Peter, of Story and of Choate,—roofs which have sheltered the heads of Washington and of Lafayette,—places associated with the birth of Hawthorne and of Prescott and with the death of Bradstreet. Indeed I know of no argument for an appropriation like this, more potent than the fact that the last governor of Massachusetts* who lived

*The spot where Governor Bradstreet lies buried in Salem is not absolutely, but is pretty certainly determined. Tradition has attached itself to a spot on the west side of the Charter Street Burial Ground, somewhat to the south of the line which divides the old and new portions of the ancient grave-yard. At this spot stands a monument of soft red brick now coated over on its four sides with white mortar, applied, no doubt, by the committee on Public Property in the year 1877, and on its top rests a thick slab of brown sand stone which bears evidence of having been inscribed with Roman letters. The General Court of the Province voted one hundred pounds, March 30th, 1697, to defray the expense of the Governor's interment, and Dr. Bentley wrote in 1799, "A Latin inscription is upon his tomb in Salem,"

in Salem sleeps unhonored at Burying Point, the Latin lines in which the general court of the Province thought to immortalize his virtues swept by decay's effacing finger until lost to sight,—the magistrate of whom Col. Pickman, in 1793, wrote "The town is more indebted to his exertions than to any other man's,"—the monument of which Dr. Bentley, in 1817 said, "It stands a memorial of the public gratitude," now mouldering there in indistinguishable dust.

Such precious relics as these must no longer live without a name. They are a portion of our enduring wealth, and, in the general appraisal, cannot be overlooked.

and again, July, 1817, "We know no monument older than his own * * erected by the gratitude of his fellow-citizens."

On the margin of a copy of the Boston Chronicle for March 14th, 1768, which was, in June 1870, in the hands of the late Robert Peele, and which contains a copy of the inscription, was a memorandum supposed by Mr. Peele to be in the handwriting of Sam'l Curwen, to this effect: "Benj., son of Col. B. Pickman sold ye tomb, being claimed by him for a small expense his father was at in repairing it, ab't ye yr. 1793 or 1794, to one Daniel Hathorne."

Near the spot above described are graves marked with the name of Hathorne.

The Chronicle of March, 1768, speaks of the inscription as "now scarce legible on the monument." The Salem Register of June 9th, 1870 says,—"the inscription is almost obliterated * * a casual observer would not discover a single word." And the same journal, in its issue of September 22nd, 1879, says, "the original tablet is yet in place, but every letter of the inscription is obliterated by the action of the elements, and the ownership of the tomb has been transferred."

GENTLEMEN OF THE CITY COUNCIL: I have attempted no exhaustive retrospect of the year just past, nor any comprehensive forecast of that which is to come. Each day will bring its duties. I deem it wiser to limit these remarks to more general views, reserving specific recommendations for future messages from time to time, holding the judgment and discretion free and the mind hospitable to wise suggestions from whatever source, as the business of the year shall pass in review before us.

We shall do well to remember that while we have become magistrates we have not ceased to be citizens,—citizens inextricably bound up in the

The Latin inscription referred to was in these words:—

SIMON BRADSTREET,

Armiger ex Ordine Senatorio in Colonia

MASSACHUSETTENSIS

ab Anno 1630, usq: ad Annum 1673.

Deinde ad Annum 1679,

Vice-Gubernator.

Deniq: ad Annum 1686, ejusdem

Coloniæ, Communi & Constanti Populi Suffragio,

GUBERNATOR.

*Vir, Judicio Lynceario præditus,
Quem nec Numma nec Honos allexit.*

*Regis Auctoritatem & Populi Libertatem
Æqua Lance libravit.*

*Religione cordatus, Vita innocuus,
Mundum et vicit et deseruit,*

*Die XXVII Marcij, Anno Dom: MDCXCVII,
Annoq: R. R's Gulielmi tertii IX & Ætatis Sux XCIV.*

prosperity of Salem, with all the living interests of citizens in the present, past and future of this venerable town, and entitled to all the right which other citizens enjoy to the charitable consideration of our acts, whether those acts shall be found to earn the approval or the condemnation of a majority of the people.

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